

## Contact us

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and/or men in your community can do:

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# Here's where we start

[www.menaspeacemakers.org/programs/action/](http://www.menaspeacemakers.org/programs/action/)



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For the past 30 years, women have done courageous work running rape crisis centers, battered women's agencies, 24 hour hotlines and safe houses. They have led the way in working

## Sexual and Domestic Violence: Whose Problem is it Anyway?

The Violence  
Against Women  
Act of 2005  
states that:

**"nearly  
one third  
of American  
women report  
physical and  
sexual abuse  
by a husband  
or boyfriend  
at some point  
in their lives"**

with policy makers across the country to revise and reform the institutional responses to sexual violence, including assault and harassment, as well as reforming the public and private response to domestic violence-related crimes. They have advocated prevention approaches through community awareness and educational programs in multiple sectors of society.

Some men have been involved in these efforts as advocates, concerned citizens, or community professionals. The vast majority of men, however, have been passive bystanders to the violence and the precursors to violence around them, while a staggering number of men have been beating and raping women and children. It is time for well meaning men to act!

### What men can do

Men are in a particularly unique position to help change the environment in which sexual and domestic violence occurs. As men, we are often involved in policy making decisions in the public and private sector that create dangerous social standards that are simply perceived as "normal" male behavior. Men are often engaged in or witness interactions in locker rooms, at hunting camps, or in office cubicles that support notions

of women's sexual objectification and subordination. Having participated in these interactions personally, men are uniquely qualified to call them into question and challenge other men, helping dispel the myths and reveal the consequences of these all too common exchanges. Men's unique responsibility in ending men's violence is not only associated with these personal exchanges or the extent to which men control major institutions in the culture, but also because men commit 90 to 100% of these offenses.

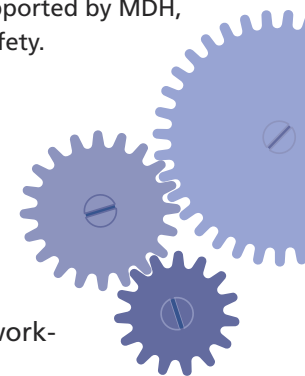
### A broad and diverse network of men is needed

to align with the voices and historically groundbreaking activities of women to prevent sexual and domestic violence. Minnesota needs: 1) Men who will promote fair and safe relationships. 2) Men who create and support healthy, joyful sexuality. 3) Men who will promote organizational practices and public policies that respect the dignity of every human being, not as sexualized objects or social subordinates to use, exploit, or disregard, but as persons with inalienable rights to choose the opportunities and circumstances of their lives.

The MN Men's Action Network was initiated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to build a public/private prevention effort that promotes male leadership. To this end, a collaborative effort between the MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater has been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. Current efforts are being supported by MDH, the Bush Foundation and the MN Department of Public Safety.

### Plan of Action

- Organize a diverse network of 500 MN men who will initiate local and statewide action to prevent sexual and domestic violence.
- Work with identified communities to develop local sexual/domestic violence prevention activities.
- Offer presentations, training, and organizational workshops throughout the state.
- Develop web based information, resource links, and statewide networking opportunities.



# Sexual Violence Statistics

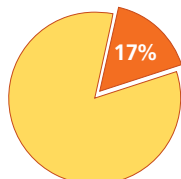
## Examples of sexual assault:

Sexual assault and abuse is any unwanted, non-consensual, manipulated or coerced form of sexual activity. It includes a wide range of behaviors, such as:

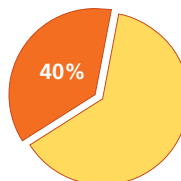
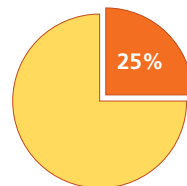
- Having your pants pulled down by someone against your wishes, or having them grab your crotch
- Having sex with someone who is too drunk to make clear decisions
- A teacher or coach having sexual contact with a student
- Forcing someone to do sexual things or look at sexual material that makes them feel uncomfortable

### Teens as Victims:

1 in 7 teens who regularly socialize on the Internet have encountered a stranger who requested cybersex. (Walach, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2005)



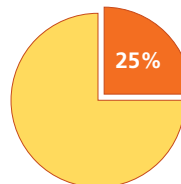
25% of ninth grade girls in Minnesota have been pinched, sexually touched or grabbed against their will by their peers. (2007 MN Student Survey)



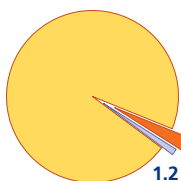
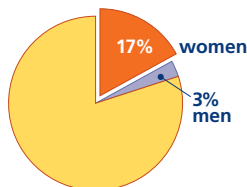
Over 1/3 of births to teenage girls are fathered by adult men age 20 and older. (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 1997)

### Adults as Victims:

Nationally, 20% to 25% of women college students reported experiencing completed or attempted rape (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000).



One in six women (17%) and one in thirty-three men (3%) reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives. (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000)



Rape usually occurs more than once. Among adults who report being raped, women experienced 2.9 rapes and men experienced 1.2 rapes in the previous year (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000)

# The Cost of Sexual Violence in Minnesota

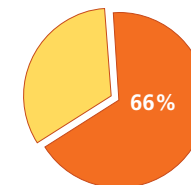
## Minnesota Department of Health July 2007 Executive Summary

In 2005, more than 61,000 Minnesota residents were sexually assaulted. Four of every five people assaulted were female. On average, each person victimized was assaulted 1.26 times during the year. More than 77,000 sexual assaults occurred.

While there were 7,200 reports to police of "unwanted sexual intercourse," 2,617 met the law enforcement definition of rape. This means that two-thirds of rapes routinely are not included in state and national rape statistics. Sexual assault in Minnesota cost almost \$8 billion in 2005, or \$1,540 per resident.

The largest cost was due to the pain, suffering, and quality of life losses of victims and their families, and related breakdowns in their lives and relationships. Medical care, mental health care, victim work loss, sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancy, suicidal acts, substance abuse, and victim services cost \$1.3 billion. Criminal justice and perpetrator treatment cost \$130.5 million. These estimates are a fraction of the true costs. For example, they exclude (1) the costs of crimes committed by people whose experiences of victimization contributed to their criminal behavior; (2) costs of family and relationship problems that arise when someone perpetrates sexual violence; (3) re-victimization during the disclosure and/or investigation process; (4) costs to those who are mistakenly suspected of committing sexual offenses; (5) costs of personal and community protection like alarms and security services; and

Two-thirds of unwanted sexual intercourse are not recorded as rape.



Per capita income in Minnesota is near \$43,000.

Minnesotans pay approximately \$5,000 per capita in state and local taxes.

Sexual assault in Minnesota cost \$1,540 per capita.

(6) heightened fear and mistrust in neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and other community settings.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, the state government spent \$130.5 million on people known to have perpetrated sexual violence, while spending \$90.5 million on those who were assaulted. Funding for offender treatment and supervision recently was boosted, but victim services do not reach every county. Nearly \$823,000 of federal funds were spent changing societal norms to prevent sexual assault. Sexual violence costs 3.3 times as much as alcohol-impaired driving in Minnesota. Policy recommendations aimed at preventing sexual violence BEFORE it occurs should be vigorously pursued, adopted, or sustained.

Find this report on the Minnesota Department of Health website at:

[www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp/)

## What are Social norms?

The environment in which we live is one of the most significant determinants of behavior. Social norms are key to enforcing and reinforcing both the positive and negative actions of community members.

Social norms can be described as: "The rules that a group uses for appropriate and inappropriate values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. These rules may be explicit or implicit." These are the things we take for granted. Often said to be "just the way things are." "Failure to stick to the rules can result in severe punishments.... A common rule is that the norms must frequently be displayed; neutrality is seldom an option."

These norms are found in our families, our businesses, government, schools, faith communities, etc. They are institutionalized boundaries and expectations of behavior and attitudes.

If we are to prevent sexual and domestic violence we must change some of our commonly held norms. These include:

- Limited roles for, and objectification and oppression of, women;
- Value placed on claiming and maintaining power over others;
- Tolerance of aggression and violence and attribution of blame to victims;
- Traditional constructs of manhood, including domination, control, and risk taking; and
- Notions of individual and family privacy that foster secrecy and silence.

(1) Perkins and Berkowitz (1986)

# Why Men and Boys?

## A Top 10 List

- 1 Most men do not agree with men's violence, yet do nothing to challenge or stop it — these men need to be mobilized to prevent violence.
- 2 Some men are already working to prevent violence but lack support; many more would like to get involved but don't know how.
- 3 Many women want men to step up and take a stand against violence.
- 4 Men commit most of the violence — it's up to them to stop it.
- 5 Men are not born violent — they become violent as a result of beliefs and norms about what it means to be a man. Work with men and boys can change these beliefs and norms and support men in rejecting violence.
- 6 Men have the potential to stop violence. Not only can they choose to not perpetrate acts of violence, they can choose to challenge the attitudes and assumptions that support gender-based violence.
- 7 Gender-based violence continues despite years of anti-violence work. The missing piece is effective violence prevention work with men.
- 8 Men experience violence too — many are survivors but few get the support they need to heal from their experience. (See RAINN Statistics for data on men experiencing sexual assault.)
- 9 Men and boys listen to their peers—we need to mobilize men and boys to spread the violence prevention message in their families, workplaces, and communities.
- 10 Decision makers and opinion leaders are mostly men — we need to work with them to get the political, financial, and moral support necessary to prevent gender-based violence.

Source: The Family Violence Prevention Fund

## Domestic Violence in Minnesota

**T**wenty-two women, 10 children, and three family members/friends were murdered in Minnesota in 2007 as the result of domestic violence or child abuse.<sup>1</sup>

# Domestic Violence Statistics

In fiscal year 2006, 37,010 women and children in Minnesota were served by community advocacy programs for battered women.<sup>2</sup>

In fiscal year 2006, 5,295 battered women and 5,131 children in Minnesota utilized emergency shelter services.<sup>3</sup>

In 2004, 998 Minnesotans received emergency department or in-hospital care for domestic violence related injuries. 97% of the victims were women.<sup>4</sup>

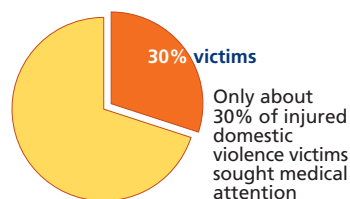
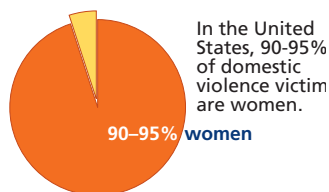
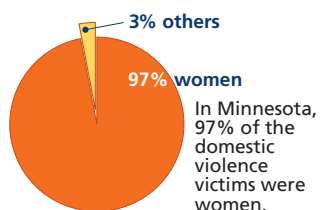
12,376 Orders for Protection were filed in Minnesota in 2004.<sup>5</sup>

## Domestic Violence in the United States

Domestic violence is a major public health problem that exceeds \$5.8 billion each year in the United States in health-related costs.<sup>6</sup>

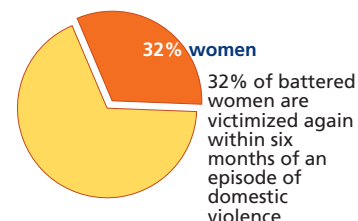
Only about 30% of injured domestic violence victims sought medical attention for their injuries.<sup>7</sup>

Over 1.7 million workdays are lost each year in the United States due to domestic violence. Employers lose between \$3 billion and \$5 billion every year



in absenteeism, lower productivity, high turnover, and health and safety costs associated with battered workers.<sup>8</sup>

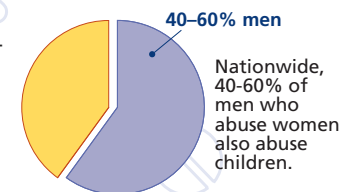
In 2004, 2,396 people were murdered by a family member or intimate partner in the United States. 43% of the victims were wives or girlfriends, 12% were husbands or boyfriends, 43% were children murdered by a parent, and 26% were other family members. This trend has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 years.<sup>9</sup>



During the six months following an episode of domestic violence, 32% of battered women are victimized again.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly one-third of American women (31%) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives.<sup>11</sup>

Fathers who batter mothers are two times as likely to seek sole custody of their children. 40-60% of men who abuse women also abuse children.<sup>12</sup>



Each year, an estimated 3.3 million children are exposed to violence by family members against their mothers or female caretakers.<sup>13</sup>

90-95% of domestic violence victims are women.<sup>14</sup>

## Sources

1. Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women 2007 Femicide Report
2. Office of Justice Programs, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
3. Office of Justice Programs, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
4. Minnesota Department of Health, Violence and Prevention Unit, February 2006
5. Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office
6. Centers for Disease Control, 2003
7. Centers for Disease Control, 2003
8. American Institute on Domestic Violence
9. Federal Bureau of Investigation: Crime in the United States, 2004
10. Bureau of Justice Statistics: Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women
11. The Commonwealth Fund
12. Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence in the Family
13. Report of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence in the Family
14. Bureau of Justice Statistics Selected Findings: Violence Between Intimates



# The Spectrum of Prevention

**T**he Spectrum of Prevention is a tool that promotes a range of activities for effective prevention. The Spectrum is based on developmental disabilities treatment efforts. It has been used nationally in prevention initiatives targeting traffic safety, violence prevention, injury prevention, nutrition, and fitness.

The Spectrum identifies multiple levels of intervention and helps people move beyond the perception that prevention is merely education. The Spectrum is a framework for a more comprehensive understanding of prevention that includes six levels for strategy development. These levels, delineated below, are complementary and when used together produce a synergy that results in greater effectiveness than would be possible by implementing any single activity or linear initiative.

LEVEL OF SPECTRUM	DEFINITION OF LEVEL
<b>6</b> Influencing Policy and Legislation	Developing strategies to change laws and policies to influence outcomes.
<b>5</b> Changing Organizational Practices	Adopting regulations and shaping norms to improve health and safety.
<b>4</b> Fostering Coalitions and Networks	Convening groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact.
<b>3</b> Educating Providers	Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others.
<b>2</b> Promoting Community Education	Reaching groups of people with information and resources to promote health and safety.
<b>1</b> Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills	Enhancing an individual's capability of preventing injury or illness and promoting safety

Greater Effectiveness ↑

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## Applying the Spectrum of Prevention

### 1. Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills

- (a) **Regard your own actions and behaviors honestly and objectively.** American culture often inundates males with negative values that appreciate and propagate male dominance. As males, we can be aware of this and feed those values that support positive male "norms" that will sustain, rather than destroy, our communities.
- (b) **Learn to recognize sexism, and challenge yourself to stop it when it occurs.** Sexism can be defined as culture's insistence that people have to follow certain rules about how they should act based on their gender, and that the roles of men, and men's lives, are valued, respected and rewarded at a greater rate than women's. It is the institutional and cultural

## A Few Ideas to Get You Started

notion that men are generally better than women and therefore rightly situated as primary decision makers in the home, at work, at school, in faith communities and in the government.

- (c) **Challenge and interrupt sexist and otherwise inappropriate remarks, jokes, stories, and behaviors.** We all have been in a situation in which we have heard a joke, remark, or story that made us uncomfortable. In a situation when this takes place, what was your reaction? Did you laugh politely? Did you go along with the flow in order to avoid an uncomfortable situation? Did you speak up in order to express your distaste with the inappropriateness of the remarks?

Most of us will probably never see a rape in progress. However, we will all see and hear attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and that promote rape and coercive control. We all have a moral responsibility to those around us to both safeguard the rights of individuals and to make every attempt to limit the culture of male dominance that exists in America.

- (d) **Recognize and oppose sexual harassment and sexually inappropriate behavior:** Sexual harassment is often an attempt by one individual to hold power over another. We as males can stop sexual harassment and other forms of sexually inappropriate behavior by

Imagine a world without sexual and domestic violence. What can men do to make that a reality?

recognizing it when it occurs and by voicing our concern or disapproval to its perpetrators. This can very often require nothing more than a simple statement that lets the individual know that you are aware that he or she has crossed the line of appropriateness.

- (e) **Talk with and listen to women:** In order to understand those around you, it is important to find out about them. What better way can there be to come to understand how to interact with women than by simply spending some time getting to know them? Ask women about their work lives, and ask how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives. Talk with your mother, your sister, your grandmother, your girlfriend or wife, or even your coworkers about how they are treated both in and outside of the workforce, and ask them about the kinds of things that men can do to create a community of equality. This type of communication can be beneficial in building both professional and personal relationships in that it removes uncertainty and makes sure that you and those with whom you interact are on the same page.
- (f) **Talk about sex:** Many of us grow up with unrealistic beliefs about sex: that we should instinctively know what to do: that we should be ready to achieve an erection instantly and maintain it for hours; and that it is unmasculine to have to talk about what gives us (or our partner) pleasure. These beliefs and others keep us from knowing our own sexuality and from enjoying our sexual relationships. Sex without discussion does not allow consent, or even minimal expectations, to be communicated. Sex is healthy when it reflects the free and mutual sharing of one another. When we discuss what makes us comfortable and uncomfortable and try new ways to express ourselves, we also greatly reduce the risk of sexual assault. Without mutual agreement, sex becomes rape.
- (g) **Discuss your Expectations:** Expectations are hopes crystallized by silence. Acting on our expectations without sufficient information can cause serious misunderstandings and can lead to rape. There is nothing wrong with feeling sexual desire, but all too often, we do not communicate our desires, find out our partner's feelings, or establish consent. Instead, we project our interest in sex onto our partner, we assume she or he feels as we do, and we misinterpret any friendliness as invitation. Establishing consent for sexual (or physical) contact at one point does not reduce the need to re-establish consent later. A person's consent to come to your apartment, to kiss you, or to touch you is not the same as consent to any other sexual acts. Neither do so-called nonverbal cues such as someone's winking at you, drinking with you, or starting to undress you imply consent for sex-

ual intercourse. Even if we think our partner is sending us "mixed messages" it is up to us to get clarification.

- (h) **Note your own treatment of women:** If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, economically or sexually controlling or abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help immediately.
- (i) **Be cognizant of your surroundings:** If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.

Adapted from Men Against Sexual Violence

## 2. Promoting Community Education

- (a) **Hold** community men's meetings/forums.
- (b) **Participate** in a speakers bureau for local sexual/domestic assault centers.
- (c) **Coordinate** speakers to present at your community of faith, civic group, business luncheon, community forum, etc.
- (d) **Develop or distribute** Public Service Announcements on TV, Radio.
- (e) **Organize men's rallies** to prevent sexual and domestic violence.
- (f) **Organize fund raisers** for local victim service centers focused on prevention efforts.
- (g) **Promote men's involvement** through community accountability measures that help restore victims. These can include donated time from male therapists for women and children, pro bono work from attorneys, donated time from lock smiths, auto mechanics (to repair damage done by husbands and boyfriends), carpenters, moving companies, etc. (see organizational practice changes.)
- (h) **Participate** in local parades—having a *men preventing sexual and domestic violence* float or banner etc.
- (i) **Develop and/or distribute** social marketing materials on billboards, in magazines, in newspapers, brochures, etc.
- (j) **Develop web sites, blogs, chat rooms** etc related to men's prevention efforts and responsibilities.
- (k) **Write letters** to the editor of your local paper.

### 3. Educating Providers

- (a) **Provide training** to youth service providers on sexual respect, integrity and egalitarian relationships.
- (b) **Train health professionals** and traditional healers to discuss respectful sexual relationships with their clients.
- (c) **Train traditional healers**, health professionals and clergy about abuses of power and sexual and domestic abuse prevention.
- (d) **Train and support teachers** in all levels of education to promote positive male roles and role models.
- (e) **Work with coaches** to provide guidelines to athletes regarding competition, power, sex and privilege.
- (f) **Work with university fraternities** regarding respectful relationships and sexual integrity.
- (g) **Work with business leaders** to promote prevention strategies in their companies related to the workplace and business practices.
- (h) **Speak with clergy** and traditional healers about prevention strategies to promote from the "pulpit", during ceremony, or in counseling sessions or discussions with parishioners and/or participants in ceremony.
- (i) **Meet with politicians** (tribal and non-tribal) to educate them on how they can promote male social norms that provide for safety in our communities.
- (j) **Provide training** for youth organizations on sexual and domestic violence prevention and integrate prevention messages in all aspects of programming.

### 4. Fostering Coalitions and Networks

- (a) **Set up meetings** of other interested men in your tribe and/or community to begin exploring how you can make your community the first in the state to be free of sexual and domestic violence.
- (b) **Identify the social "norms"** that contribute to sexual and domestic violence. Identify the personal and institutional practices and policies that support those norms. Begin to collectively change those practices and policies that create an environment of sexual violence and threat.

- (c) **Call your local sexual assault and domestic violence center** and ask them how you and/or a group of local men could assist them in their efforts at prevention.
- (d) **Find other men** in your state and/or in Indian Country that are working to end sexual and domestic violence. Speak with them to gain ideas and inspiration.
- (e) **Collaborate** with other groups of men to form or participate in a broader network (regional, state, national) of diverse men working to promote male models of respect for women, children and each other.
- (f) **Develop coalitions** and networks that respect the diverse communities of men. Acknowledge the influence that sexual violence has played in subjugating one group of men by another, either by race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or other stated differences.
- (g) **Build alliances** with women's and/or victim services organizations who have been leaders in the world wide effort to prevent sexual and domestic violence.
- (h) **Locate and speak** with established men's organizations to see how they might involve themselves in sexual and domestic violence prevention activities. This could include local and state civic organizations, business groups, communities of faith, culturally specific organizations, sportsman's clubs, athletic organizations, alumni associations, etc.
- (i) **Network with state and tribal governments** and department heads to ascertain how they could participate in the effort to stop sexual and domestic violence before it begins.
- (j) **Speak with political parties** to make prevention efforts a campaign issue.
- (k) **Organize with labor unions** to take a public stand encouraging male attitudes and behaviors that promote sexual respect and dignity.

### 5. Changing Organizational Practice

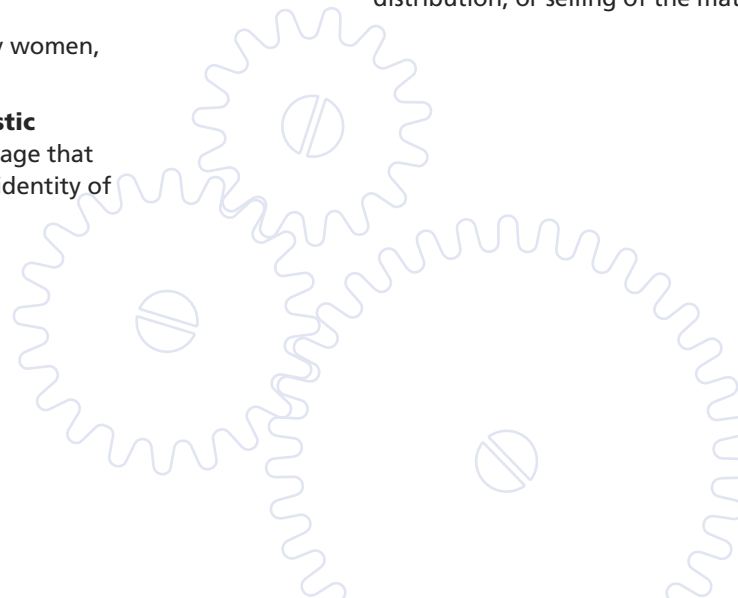
- (a) **Ask if organizations** in your community have a sexual harassment policy. If not, help them put one together. If yes, how is it monitored and does it work?
- (b) **Talk to mainstream book store owners** and management about removing pornography from their collection.
- (c) **Develop/utilize tools and policies** for businesses to evaluate the workplace environment for safety and equitability.



- (d) **Develop/utilize evaluation tools and policies** for product development, marketing and sales that support a safe, healthy and sexually respectful environment.
- (e) **Do not support businesses** that create or sell products that support sexual or domestic violence or sexual subordination/objectification.
- (f) **Develop criteria for government agencies' purchasing policies** regarding vendors. For example, require that government financed conferences or events take place in hotels and convention centers that do not provide adult videos (pornography).
- (g) **Set standards** for athletic recruitment practices.
- (h) **Make job requirements for coaches** to include training for athletes on sexual and domestic violence prevention.
- (i) **Require routine training and monitoring of fraternities** and athletic teams to assess the environment as it relates to sexual and domestic violence and/or respect.
- (j) **Provide training for youth organizations** on sexual and domestic violence prevention and integrate prevention policy in all aspects of programming.
- (k) **Boy Scouts develop merit badges** on sexual integrity and respect. Develop programming on respect of women and girls and critical awareness of social messages that promote the sexual disrespect of women and girls.
- (l) **Develop and/or implement district-wide curriculum** in schools that speaks to healthy relationships and healthy sexuality predicated upon the foundations of mutual respect and value.
- (m) **Develop marketing practices** that do not sexually objectify women, children and men.
- (n) **Review how the news media reports sexual and domestic assaults.** How do they portray the crimes? Do they use language that holds the alleged offender accountable? Do they protect the identity of victims?

## 6. Influencing Policy And Legislation

- (a) **Contact your legislator** and talk about your concerns and ask what they are doing to prevent sexual and domestic violence, ie: Funding, legislative initiatives, support. (This is quite different from catching and locking up offenders. While consistent and effective intervention is critical, we want to stop the violence before it even begins.)
- (b) **Make men's participation** in the prevention of sexual and domestic violence a campaign issue.
- (c) **Review corporate citizenship** by the messages and merchandize they produce, distribute, and sell. This includes all sectors of the economy from the mass media, to video games, athletics, manufacturing, the internet, the hospitality industry, to health care.
- (d) **Tie governmental subsidies** to sexually respectful, equitable workplace policies including hiring, promotions, sexual harassment, work place violence, and marketing campaigns.
- (e) **Develop local or state ordinances** that restrict or regulate businesses which support the sexual subordination and exploitation of women and/or children, eg: Strip clubs, pornography shops.
- (f) **Provide legislation** that would include comprehensive sexuality education for youth that would include issues of consent, sexual respect and integrity.
- (g) **Create legislation** that allows individuals to sue the pornography industry if they can show that they were harmed by the manufacture, distribution, or selling of the material.





**Tony Porter**  
Educator, Activist  
and Lecturer

A gifted public speaker, Tony Porter is an educator and activist working in the social justice arena for over twenty years. Tony is the original visionary and co-founder behind A CALL TO MEN: The National Association of Men and Women Committed to Ending Violence Against Women. He is the author of a new book titled *Well-Meaning Men... Breaking Out of the "Man Box" Ending Violence Against Women*.

## A Call to Men: It's time

By Tony Porter ©2009

It's time for those of us who are "well-meaning men" to begin to acknowledge the role male privilege and socialization play in domestic violence, sexual assault and violence against women in general. It's time for us to claim the collective responsibility we have in ending violence against women. It's time to become part of the solution.

At this point, you may be questioning why you picked up this book in the first place. You are a good guy, not one of those men who would assault a woman; you would never commit a rape or hit your wife or girlfriend — you're not part of the problem. So how can you become part of the solution? You are exactly the kind of man who CAN help to end violence against women. So just what is a good guy, we call them "well-meaning man." A well-meaning man is a man who believes women should be respected, including his wife, girlfriend and other women in his life. A well-meaning man does not assault a woman. A well-meaning man believes in equality for women, that women should be treated fairly and justly. A well-meaning man, for all practical purposes, is a nice guy, a good man.

It is with this understanding that my work, my vision, is not to "bash" well-meaning men. An assault on men is not going to end the assault on women. I seek to help us understand through a process of re-education and accountability that, with all of our goodness, we have been socialized to continue a system of domination, dehumanization and oppression over women. I do not come to this work as a man who thinks he knows it all or has it all together. I, too, am a "well-meaning man". For twenty years I worked in the field of alcohol/chemical dependency. Early on in that work I began to address the importance of cultural diversity in the field of alcohol/chemical dependency. After about three years of that work, with no disrespect to it, I began to realize that I had to go much deeper than a cultural diversity approach permitted. My work then began to focus more on issues related to group oppression, particularly racism. As I went about my business addressing the "ism" of race — racism and its relationship to alcoholism/chemical

dependency, women I worked with began to confront me on my "own sexism".

At first I was very insulted, thinking (and sometimes verbalizing) "I'm a good guy, I'm no sexist". This remained my mindset for quite some time. Only through a series of events that challenged me did I begin to dismantle my cherished belief. Over the next five years I immersed myself in learning, owning and addressing my sexism and the collective sexism of men. I began to understand that domestic violence, sexual assault and all other forms of violence against women are rooted in a sexist; a male dominating society emerged in my consciousness.

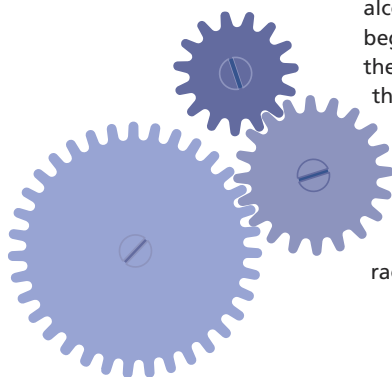
As well-meaning men, we have made violence against women a "women's issue" and spend very little, if any, time addressing the issue. We look at this issue through our own lens, a male socialized perspective, leaving little room for any true accountability for men. This is not meant to harm women, for many of us have no idea what we're doing. Rather, we are just going with the flow, doing things as we always have. This has limited our ability or willingness to be concerned with how we affect women or how women experience us. One of the key things we have not done, and continue not to do is listen to women.

Deeply imbedded in the socialization of men, well-meaning men, is the conscious and subconscious desire and ability to tune women out, silence them, take away their voice, and not listen. We claim and justify this action by saying that women talk too much, or nag. We make no connection to the reality that if we would listen, they would not need to repeat themselves or be so detailed. As men, well-meaning men, if we choose to listen to women and take their direction, we could actually end violence against women, as we know it here in the United States of America.

Three key aspects of male socialization that create, normalize and maintain violence against women are: Men viewing women as "less than"; men treating women as "property"; and men seeing women as "objects". All three are major contributors to violence against women, perpetuated consciously or not by all men, including well-meaning men.

We must begin to examine the ways in which male socialization fosters violence against women. We must begin to examine the ways we separate ourselves from men who assault and abuse women, while simultaneously giving them permission to do so. We make monsters out of them as a means of supporting our position that we're different from them. We remain focused on fixing them, pathologizing their violence, blaming family history, chemical dependency, mental illness, or an inability to manage their anger, while for the most part, these are not the reasons men abuse women. It makes sense that we will expend the energy to "fix" them in order to maintain and even strengthen our status as "good guys". In doing so, we squeeze out the space needed to understand and acknowledge that violence against women is a manifestation of sexism. Once we can come to admit that violence against women springs forth from sexism, we will find all men are part of the problem.

The men that we identify as "the bad guys," who assault and abuse women by and large do so as a choice. These men receive permission to behave this way from those of us who are well-meaning men. We give men who abuse and assault permission in several ways: We stay quiet, "mind our own business"; we minimize the consequences



and have limited means to hold these men accountable. We historically view the violence as being only physical abuse, or sexual assault, this allows us to leave ourselves out of the equation and put distance between the abuse and us.

Okay, some of you may be saying "slow down, you're hitting me with too much too fast." Well, we will walk through this step-by-step together. I will share with you many of my personal experiences as well as what I have learned. What is most important to note is that this book is based on the teachings of women. If there is any contribution that I have to offer it is that I am finally starting to listen.

This book also grew partly out of a series of discussions I have had with men over the last five years: Men of all ages, ethnic groups, levels of education and family backgrounds. What did they all have in common? They were all "well-meaning men". I invite you to join in and examine your own role as a well-meaning man in this society. I invite you to begin to challenge other well-meaning men to join you. Together, we can create social change and a world that is more respectful and safer for women. This is long overdue; it's time to get started.



**Jackson Katz** is one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists. An educator, author and filmmaker, he is internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work in the field of gender violence prevention education with men and boys, particularly in the sports culture and the military.

He is the author of *The Macho Paradox, Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*

## More Than a Few Good Men

By Jackson Katz ©1999

How can we get a critical mass of men — at UMass and around the country — to speak out about men's violence against women? How can we make sexist attitudes or behaviors toward women socially unacceptable among men? How can we encourage more than a few good men to work with women on these issues as partners and allies, and not against them as hostile antagonists?

Activists in the movements to end rape, battering, and sexual harassment seem to revisit these questions with greater urgency each time we're confronted with high-profile instances of gender violence, as opposed to the vast majority of incidents that devastate individual lives and families, but never make it to the local or national news.

You would think that it would be a fairly straightforward task to find men who are willing to stand up and be counted in the effort to reduce the outrageous level of violence — physical, sexual, emotional — that our mothers, sisters, girlfriends, wives, and daughters have to live with. But sadly, it is anything but easy to find men willing to take that step.

In fact, there are a number of obvious and subtle forces at work to keep the nonviolent majority of men silent. The obvious forces include policing mechanisms in male peer culture that stifle the voices of men who are uncomfortable with abuses perpetrated by their fellow men. These policing mechanisms include questioning the manhood and heterosexuality of men who would dare take the "women's side" in the supposed "battle between the sexes." Using derisive appellations like "mama's boy," "p-whipped," "sensitive new age man," and "fag" for men who dare to break the masculine code of silence, men often remind each other that we'll never be considered "real men" if we don't exhibit blind loyalty to our sex-class.

A more subtle force that keeps many men from becoming actively involved in the struggle against gender violence is the defensiveness many of us feel at the mere mention of the scope of the problem. When we hear women say they're angry about all of the violence men do to women, some guys respond indignantly. "Hey, it's not all guys. I'm not a rapist," we say, as if we'd been accused of being one. In this case, defensiveness is really a form of denial that allows us to avoid being personally implicated.

Defensive posturing is responsible, in part, for the virulence in some circles of the backlash against feminism. Feminists, of course, have long been at the forefront, in our society and worldwide, of efforts to reduce men's violence against women, and indeed all forms of violence.

And yet they are all too frequently labeled "male-bashers." This Orwellian inversion, calling the anti-violence activists the "bashers," or the violent ones, allows us to disregard the urgency of their message. It's a version of "kill the messenger," the time-honored tradition of discrediting the bearers of unpleasant or discomfiting news, rather than face squarely the implications of their message.

Killing the messenger is a tactical cousin of another popular avoidance strategy, blaming the victim. If you believe that somehow the victim caused herself to be violated, you sidestep inquiry into the role of the aggressor. If you're a man who doesn't want to look at the ways that you as a man contribute — through silence or more active means — to a culture where violence against women is so common as to be almost unremarkable, focusing on the victim is a convenient strategy of psychic self-defense.

One of the notable features of the recent spate of gendered assaults at UMass is that because several of the attacks were alleged to have been perpetrated by strangers and took place during the day, it's socially unacceptable to blame the victims. As a result, it appears that a number of men — and women — have been politicized as never before about the pervasiveness of men's violence against women.

This is one positive outgrowth of an otherwise tragic series of events, because awareness about the extent of the problem, and outrage about it, are some of the first steps necessary for mobilizing large numbers of people to organize for change. If the perpetrators are caught, however, many people will be tempted to believe that

the attacks were the isolated acts of a sick individual and/or group.

This is understandable, because it's easier to deal with the concept of some psycho rapist-muggers than it is to look critically at the culture that produces such men at a pandemic rate. We know, however, that most violence against women is perpetrated by men close to them, in their family and friendship circles, men who are "normal" in every superficial respect.

This chilling fact means that if we truly want to reduce the rates of gender violence in our society as we enter the 21st century, we have to work hard to redefine what "normal" means. If we can achieve a society where it is more normal for men to speak out against gender violence than it is for them to commit it, we'll be a lot healthier society than we are today.



**Evon Peter** is Neetsaii Gwich'in (Alaska Native) and Jewish from a small mountain village in Northeast Alaska called Vashraii K'oo. From a young age he chose to follow a path that has challenged him to look within and into history, so that he could build something healthier for the future generations.

He and his wife, Enei Begaye Peter, a Navajo from Shonto, Arizona, support culturally based leadership and sustainability projects in Alaska and the Southwest through the Indigenous Leadership Institute and the Black Mesa Water Coalition.

## We must Stop the Violence against Women

By Evon Peter ©2009

I am writing at the request of an Indian woman who I carry great respect for in my life. Her request was clear, that as male leaders among our people we must speak out and set an example for respectful relationships with the women in our lives. Her request came in the wake of an Amnesty International report that claimed, "more than one in three Alaska Native and American Indian women will be raped in their lifetime."

I am a Gwich'in son, a husband, a brother, and a father of three children, including two beautiful daughters. I have long prayed for the well being of our people, in every sense of the word. As with us all, I am far from perfect as a human being, but I strive to live a good life, learn from my mistakes, and be there for my family and people as needed. I am writing to lend my voice to stop the violence against women. This letter is in honor of my grandmother, mother, sister, wife, and daughters. It is for all our relations.

It sometimes brings tears to my eyes when I think of the challenges and hardships that our peoples are facing. Every one of us carries a heavy weight from our personal experiences and those of our parents and grandparents. The spiritual and cultural fabric of our peoples has been torn in many ways.

The question that we are left with is: How are we going to manage the weight we carry?

There are paths we can follow that are dangerous for our selves and the people around us. Such as self-blame, jealousy, hatred, and self-pity. These often lead to depression, insecurity, alcohol and drug abuse, and many forms of violence against our selves and others. On these paths we perpetuate many of the same violations we have experienced upon those who we love the most. In this way, over generations, our torn cultures have adopted many kinds of abuses as normal.

*While we cannot change the past, we have a responsibility to stop the cycle of violence for our own good and the good of future generations.*

It is unacceptable for a man to violate the personal space of a woman in any way. It is unacceptable for any one of us to intentionally harm another person; physically, mentally, spiritually, or emotionally unless in protection of our own life or our people.

What I am proposing is not easy. It is in fact the greatest challenge we face as human beings because it requires us to get to see and know ourselves. Do we ever lose control of ourselves? Why? Under what circumstances? Do we need help to work through the mental, emotional, or spiritual challenges we are facing in our own lives?

It also requires us to change how we are and the decisions we make, many of which have become a way of being in our lives. This is what I refer to as healing ourselves. If we are not on a path of becoming healthier, then we will continue to dig deeper into the cycle of violence.

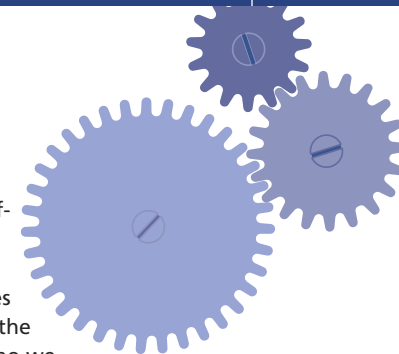
Traditionally, we were people who were aware of our environment around us, as well as within us. In this way, we were able to make wise decisions for our selves and our people. As more of our people embark on a path of healing, we then begin to carry a communal responsibility to mend the spiritual and cultural fabric of our peoples.

I ask that our men look at themselves; at who they are and what they have become. If you cannot control yourself or know that you are doing harm, seek the help you need to change your ways. It may be within your self, out on the land, in laying down the bottle, or with a trusted healer or counselor. Think of the respect you carry for your grandmothers. This is the way in which you should be respecting all women.

I encourage our people who are on the path to stick with it. Build support and trust among one another. You are doing good work for our peoples.

With prayers for all our people,

Evon Peter







**Robert Jensen** is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. In his research, Jensen draws on a variety of critical approaches to media and power. Much of his work has focused on pornography and the radical feminist critique of sexuality and men's violence.

He is the author of *Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity*, City Lights Books.

## Sex, Sexual Violence, and the Sex Industry: Some thoughts for boys and men

By Robert Jensen © 2005

Like most boys and men in the United States, I have used pornography. I remember what it feels like to look, to masturbate to pornography. I know that it is an intense sexual experience that can bring physical pleasure. I also remember that after the rush was over, I was left with an empty feeling. How could something that felt so good physically end up leaving me feeling so bad emotionally?

For a long time, I thought the unpleasant feelings came because I felt guilty or ashamed, or because I was afraid of being caught. I did struggle with those feelings, but it took me a long time to figure out that the emptiness was really coming from somewhere else. People have sex for many different reasons — for the physical sensation, out of love, to cope with loneliness, to feel like a “real man” or a “real woman,” pressure from friends, or to try to get pregnant. I have had sex for those reasons, but the older I get the more I have come to understand what sex means for me. For me, sex is mostly about the desire to feel a strong connection to another person. It is not the only way I feel connected to people (often that sense of connection comes simply through talking), but sex is a powerful way to bring me close to someone I care about. What really matters to me in sex is that connection; without it, the physical pleasures seem hollow.

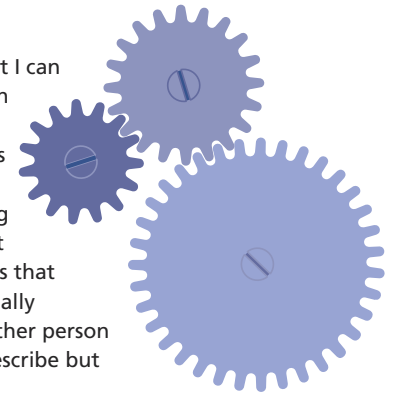
So, I have come to realize that certain kinds of sexual experiences will never make me feel very good. If I were to use pornography, there is no way I could have a connection to a picture on a page or an image on a screen. If I were to buy sex from a prostitute, I would be foolish to think I am going to have a real connection with someone who is having sex with me to survive economically. And if I were to try to force someone to

have sex who didn't want to, the only emotions that I can expect to feel are fear and pain. I have been lucky in my life. Although I have made many mistakes and hurt people (and hurt myself) in sexual relationships by being selfish or unaware, I have also been able to feel that connection, that sense of really knowing and trusting another person. As I look back and sort through my life, I realize that the sexual experiences that meant something to me were the ones in which I really wanted to experience that sense of being with another person — of truly being close in a way that is difficult to describe but wonderful to feel.

Not everyone is so lucky, especially the women who are used and hurt in the sex industry and through sexual violence. When we think about what we want sexually, it's important for us to be honest, to go beyond the macho talk and discuss our emotional needs. But even more important, we have to remember that our sexual behavior has consequences for other people. We live in a culture that trains men to be dominant and women to be submissive. Sometimes we fall into those patterns without realizing it. Sometimes, when we do fall into such behaviors, we lose sight of how our actions can hurt others.

The first step to changing our own behavior is listening to women and girls talk about their experiences so that we can begin to understand how they are so often hurt by men. Then we have to hold each other accountable, to make sure that we don't look the other way when we see men and boys — including our friends — hurting others through sex and violence. We live in a society that tolerates, and in some ways encourages, a lot of cruelty. Pornographers make money selling images of men humiliating women sexually. Boys will casually refer to a girl as a “ho” or a slut without thinking of the pain it causes. And men talk about how women they abuse “deserved it” or “asked for it.” It can be painful to face these facts, especially in the arena of our intimate and sexual lives. But I have found that turning away from those painful realities is not a solution.

This world will allow us to be selfish and cruel. But if we want something beyond that, we can't turn away from the pain that women and girls live with. Nor can we turn away from the feeling in our own gut that being tough, being aggressive, being dominant — that being a “man” in the way we so often get taught to be a man — is not only keeping us from being able to touch with love, but to feel love. We need to stop the desperate efforts to be men and begin to be people.





If you want to find out more about these issues and what men are doing around the country and the world check out these links.

## Links

### Men Can Stop Rape

[www.mencanstoprape.org/](http://www.mencanstoprape.org/)

A Washington, DC-based organization with a very interesting *Men of Strength* campaign.

### The Family Violence Prevention Fund

[www.endabuse.org/](http://www.endabuse.org/)

Has developed a playbook called *Coaching Men to Boys*.

### The California ([www.calcasa.org/](http://www.calcasa.org/)) and Minnesota ([www.mncasa.org/](http://www.mncasa.org/)) Coalitions against Sexual Assault

Great information and resources.

### XYonline

[www.xyonline.net/](http://www.xyonline.net/)

A website focused on men, masculinity, and gender politics. A space for the exploration of issues of gender and sexuality, the daily issues of men's and women's lives, and practical discussion of personal and social change.

### Jackson Katz

[www.jacksonkatz.com/](http://www.jacksonkatz.com/)

An author and anti-violence educator.

### A Call to Men

[www.acalltomen.com](http://www.acalltomen.com)

Organizing men to end violence against women.

### The Sexual Violence Prevention Program

[www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp/](http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/svp/)

The Minnesota Department of Health offers great information and tools for prevention work.

### Cordelia Anderson

[www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)

Information about the normalization of sexual harm, particularly among children.

### Men Stopping Violence

[www.menstoppingviolence.org](http://www.menstoppingviolence.org)

Men Stopping Violence is a social change organization dedicated to ending men's violence against women.

### The Center for Disease Prevention (CDC)

[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/svfacts.htm)

Offers a vast array of facts and information about sexual violence.

### Go Ask Alice

[www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/)

Interesting information about sexuality and other health topics.

### Georgia Tech

[www.voice.gatech.edu/](http://www.voice.gatech.edu/)

Great information on prevention and getting men involved.

### Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV)

[www.menagainstsexualviolence.org/](http://www.menagainstsexualviolence.org/)

An initiative that began in July of 2001 with the ambitious goal to gather pledge support from one million of Pennsylvania's male residents has quickly grown in only three short years to take on a life of its own. Efforts to include men in Pennsylvania's anti-sexual violence movement have ranged from awareness campaigns locally in communities around the state, to rallies and pledge signing events at many of our commonwealth's colleges and universities.

### Men as Peacemakers

[www.menaspeacemakers.org/](http://www.menaspeacemakers.org/)

One of the partners in this project and the web page host. Nearly all of this information is also available on our web site and is down-loadable.

## Contact the Minnesota Men's Action Network and get involved

There are multiple ways men can participate, depending on their available time and resources. Sign up on the Web site at: [www.menaspeacemakers.org/programs/action/](http://www.menaspeacemakers.org/programs/action/). Click the "join now" button and enter your information. After filling in your contact data, click the "submit" button at the bottom of the page.

### Chuck Derry

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